

Youth Involvement 101: Youth M.O.V.E 'ing Systems in Maryland

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“Youth Involvement is the next step towards effective and productive services. Youth need to be involved as equal partners in the planning of their lives. They will always know more about themselves than the providers will know about them.”

- **Victor Damian, Youth Task Force, San Francisco**

What is Youth Involvement?

Youth involvement occurs when:

- The voice and actions of youth are valued
- Youth are utilized as a resource in the development of themselves and their community



What Isn't Youth Involvement

- Manipulation
- Decoration
- Tokenism



Views Around Youth Involvement

- Youth as objects: Adults know what is best for young people
- Youth as Recipients: Adults view youth participation as an experience that will be good for them
- Youth as Partners: Adults view youth as important as contributors

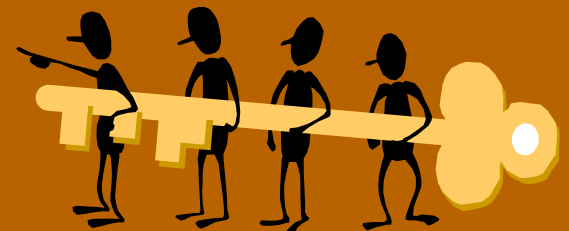
Youth Involvement Works!

- Personal experience is the expertise they can offer to create systems change
- Youth reclaim their power and responsibility
- Youth are more likely to succeed in treatment if their power and voice is listened to and integrated
- Youth gain a sense of belonging, competence, usefulness and empowerment.



The Stigma of Mental Illness:

- The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health describes stigma as, “a pervasive barrier to understanding the gravity of mental illness and the importance of mental health.”
- Education is Key



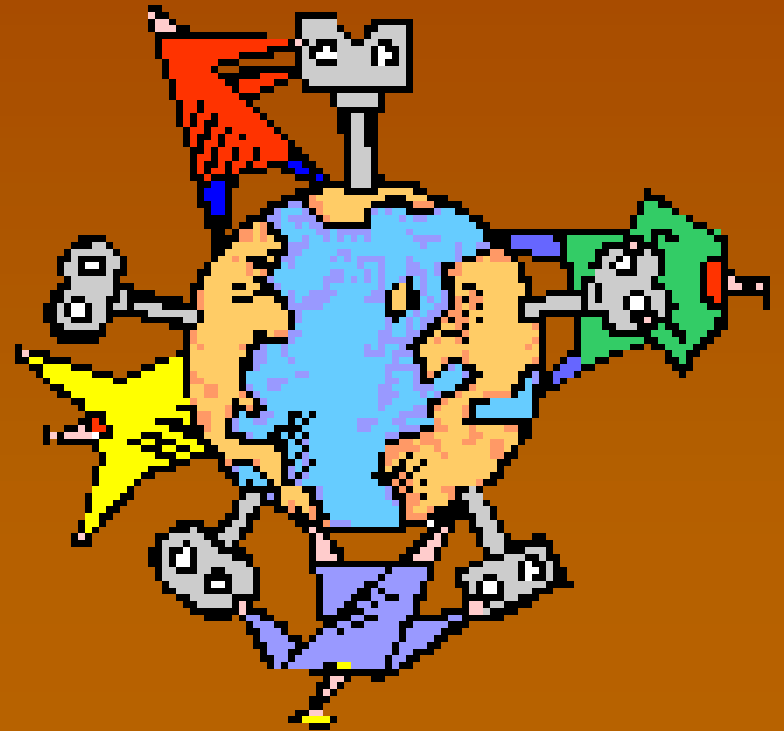
Combating Stigma



- Youth who have experienced stigma because of their mental illness have a passion to fight it
- Youth involvement is offered as proof that individuals with mental illness can function and be contributing members in society
- Young people educating peers, professionals and other adults.
- Many youth groups include this in their mission

Cultural Competency

- Understanding stigma
- Understanding and Valuing youth culture
- Valuing all backgrounds
 - ethnic, religious, gender, sexual orientation



Philosophies of Youth Guided

- Youth involvement is proof youth with MI can function and be contributing members
- Youth have rights
- Youth are utilized as resources and part of the solutions in the development of themselves, their communities and youth serving systems
- Youth have access to information that is pertinent to their tx and lives
- Families, professionals and other adults share power with youth
- Adults and youth respect youth culture and all forms of diversity
- Youth are valued as experts
- Youth are supported in a way that is developmentally targeted to their individual needs.

Youth Motivating Others through Voices of Experience

Youth M.O.V.E. National is a youth led national organization devoted to improving services and systems that support positive growth and development by uniting the voices of individuals who have lived experience in various systems including mental health, juvenile justice, education, and child welfare.

www.youthmove.us

YOUTH

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MARYLAND

Mission

We the members of Youth M.O.V.E. Maryland will work as a diverse collective to unite the voices and causes of youth while raising awareness around youth issues. We will advocate for youth rights and voice in mental health and the other systems that serve them, for the purpose of empowering youth to be equal partners in the process of change.

Vision

We the members of Youth 'Motivating Others through Voices of Experience' (M.O.V.E.) Maryland envisions systems in which every youth person that enters a youth serving system is being prepared for life through genuine opportunities and authentic youth involvement throughout all systems levels. We help guide the redevelopment of the systems so that no youth falls through the cracks. We advocate for youth to utilize their power and expertise to foster change in their communities and in their own lives. Youth M.O.V.E. Maryland works toward the day when all people will recognize and accept the culture of youth, their families, and the communities that serve them in order to be truly culturally-competent. Youth M.O.V.E. Maryland looks forward to the day when youth are no longer treated as numbers, problems or caseloads, but as individuals and humans. We will all stand as partners: youth, youth advocates, supporters, parents, and professionals to see our youth become successful.

Youth M.O.V.E. Maryland Facts

- First state chapter of Youth M.O.V.E. National
- Supported by Maryland Transformation Grant
- Currently has a total of 13 jurisdictions participating
- Each jurisdiction consist of 2 youth leaders and 1 adult partner
- CSA Commitment = Support from Transformation Grant

Purpose and Goals of Youth M.O.V.E. Maryland

- Promote authentic youth voice and presence at the community and state level.
- To become the advisory board to MHA
- Provide youth with the opportunities to advocate and use their experiences to better youth serving systems

What's Happening in the Jurisdictions....

- Jurisdictions are in the current start up process of developing youth groups within their communities.
YM Montgomery – MO County All Stars
- Several jurisdictions had their YM kick-off event during May, which is mental health awareness month
YM Washington County – Held theirs in the local mall

What's Happening in the Jurisdictions.... Cont.

- Solid partnerships are being created with other local agencies, organizations initiatives.

YM Mid-Shore – Has created a partnership with Chesapeake Volunteer Center

- Thinking beyond the box... utilizing the natural resources within their own communities.

YM Carroll – Was featured on the program “Fact, Fiction and Hope” which was aired on their local access channel for the WHOLE month of May!!

Presentations & Collaborations

- YMMD leaders were panel presenters at the 07' MARFY Conference
- YMMD leaders presented at the 08' Minority Youth Outreach Project
- YMMD leaders facilitated the youth track for the 08' R.E.A.C.H. Retreat
- Collaborating with DHRs Foster Care Youth Advisory Board to create their Annual Teen Conference for 08'

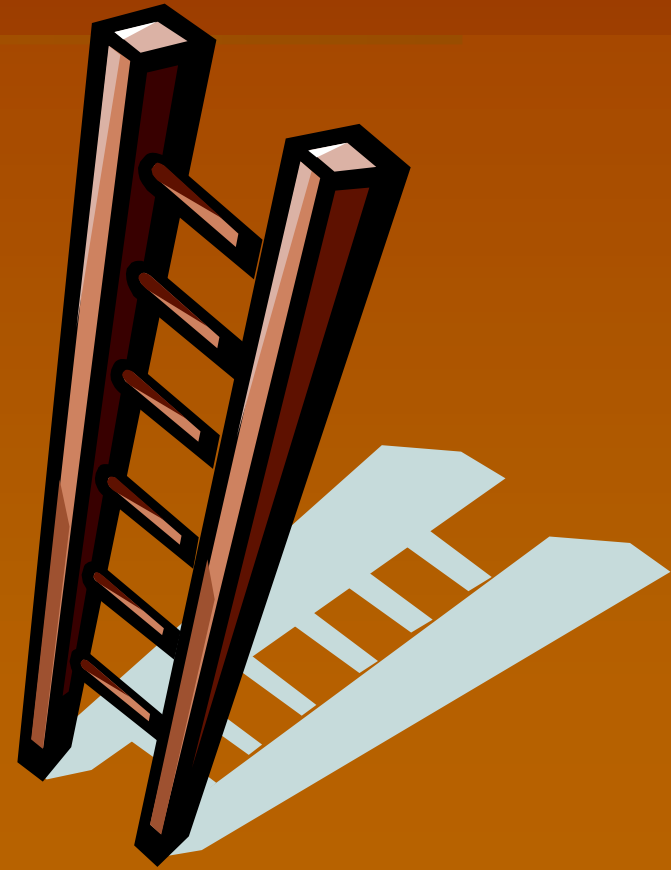
Presentations & Collaborations Cont.

- YMMD leaders were also part of the strategic planning for the “Ready by 21” initiative here in Maryland.
- Leaders conducted discussion groups for the DJS Interagency Strategic Plan
- Member also sit on important committees and councils like, Partners Council, Ready by 21 and the FITT (Family Informed Trauma Treatment)Center

Ladder Of Young People's Participation

9. Youth Initiated and Directed
8. Youth Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults
7. Youth and Adult Initiated and Directed
6. Adult Initiated, Shared Decisions with Youth
5. Consulted and Informed
4. Assigned and Informed
3. Tokenism
2. Decoration
1. Manipulation

Maximum Youth Participation



Minimum Youth Participation

Youth Guided → Driven

- A process
- Foundation-
resources, support,
education
- Individual,
community, Policy
Making
- Successful Transition
into Adulthood



Youth Guided

Youth Guided means that young people have the right to be empowered, educated, and given a decision making role in the care of their own lives as well as the policies and procedures governing care for all youth in the community, state and nation. This includes giving young people a sustainable voice, being listened to, and the focus should be towards creating a safe environment enabling a young person to gain self sufficiency in accordance to the cultures and beliefs they abide by. Further, through the eyes of a youth guided approach we are aware that there is a continuum of power that should be given to the young people based on their understanding and maturity in this strength based change process. Youth guided also means that this process should be fun and worthwhile.

Youth-Guided In Short

Youth-Guided means to value youth as experts, respect their voice, and treat them as equal partners in creating systems change at the individual, state and national level.

Youth Guided

Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Youth are empowered in their planning process from the beginning and have a voice in decision- making▪ Youth receive training▪ Equal partnership is valued
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Community partners and stakeholders are open and willing to partner with youth and have created safe spaces for young people
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Youth are invited to meetings and training and support is provided▪ Youth can speak on their experiences▪ Adults value what youth have to say in an advisory capacity.▪ Youth are voting members of all boards and committees

Youth Directed

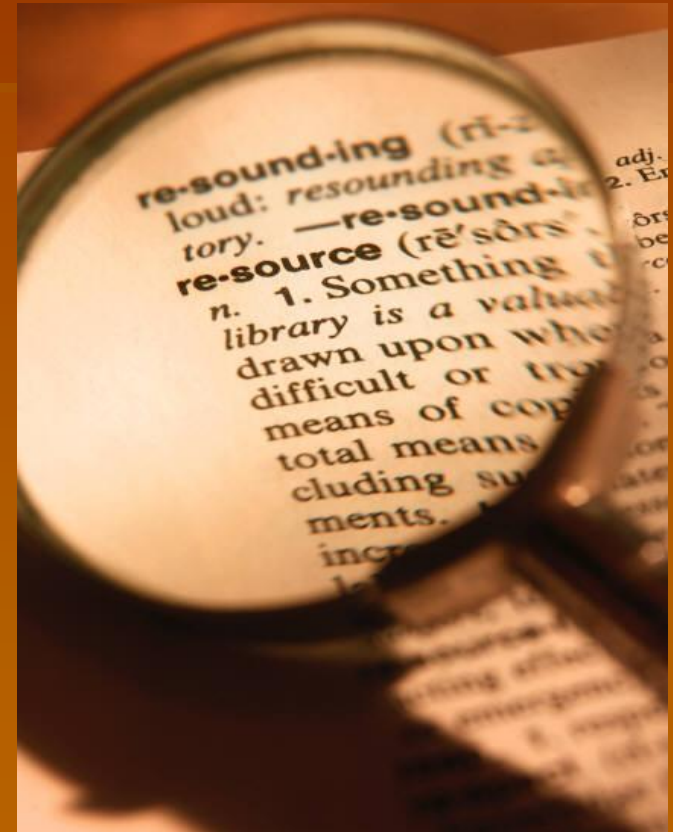
Individual	<p>The young person is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Telling his or her story▪ Building relationships with people who support them and making decisions in their care▪ Developing a deeper knowledge and understanding of the systems▪ Not in a consistent period of crisis & basic needs are met.
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Youth have positions and voting power on community boards▪ More youth advocates are involved and are recruiting other youth.▪ Community members respect the autonomy of youth voice and spread the word on the importance of youth voice.
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Youth understand the policy process and have experience being involved and training.▪ Youth have understanding of the current policy issues and speak their opinions▪ Youth opinions are heard and action is taken.▪ There is increased of youth and a decrease in tokenism.

Youth Driven

Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪The youth sets vision and goals for treatment with input from team.▪The youth is aware of options and is able to utilize and apply knowledge of resources.▪The youth is able to stand on his or her own and take responsibility for choices▪Youth are mentors and peer advocates for other youth.▪Youth are giving presentations based on personal experiences and knowledge.▪The youth is making the transition into adulthood.
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪Community partners listen to youth and make changes accordingly.▪Young people have a safe place to go and be heard▪There are multiple paid positions for youth in every decision making group▪Youth form and facilitate youth groups in communities.▪Youth provide training in the community
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪Youth are calling meetings and setting agendas in policy making▪Youth hold trainings on policy making for youth and adults.▪Youth inform the public about current policies and have a position platform.▪Youth lead research to drive policy change.

Here's why adults are so valuable in youth involvement:

- Adults can provide a safe and caring environment
- Adults serve as mentors and role models
- Adults have access to resources that youth do not
- Adults have a different knowledge that comes with being around longer
- Adults currently have the power to change the system



Effective Youth Participation



HAPPENS WHEN:

- It's the youth's group and empowered youth voice is woven throughout your system of care
- Youth are valued for their experience and expertise (not as the problem)
- Youth consumers are advocates and educators
- Youth members are on boards and committees
- Youth are decision makers

Effective Youth Participation (cont...)

- Youth on boards are treated the same as other members
- Youth are able to get to meetings (transportation & schedule)
- The group's efforts are sustainable
- Adults in the community are allies and support youth involvement
- Equal partnership and shared respect



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